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General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

74th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 2 March 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Acharya (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/64/631/Add.5)

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/64/631/Add.5, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/64/631 and Add.1, Add.2, Add.3 and Add.4, the Federated States of Micronesia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 46 (*continued*)

Global road safety crisis

Note by the Secretary-General (A/64/266)

Draft resolution (A/64/L.44/Rev.1*)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Victor Kiryanov, Colonel-General, Chief, Road Traffic Safety Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*.

Mr. Kiryanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today's consideration of the issue of road safety is of the utmost importance in the context the efforts being made by the international community in the field of development. Mortality and injury in road accidents are not only a major global public health problem; they also have a negative impact on the social and economic progress of Member States and their implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The data contained in the World Health Organization (WHO) report (see A/64/266) is alarming. Nearly 1.3 million people die every year and between 20 million and 50 million suffer injuries as a result of road traffic crashes. Road traffic injuries are among the three leading causes of death for people between the ages of five and 44 years. According to expert estimates, global losses due to road traffic injuries total $518 billion and cost Governments between 1 and 3 per cent of their countries' gross national product.

Recognition by the international community of the gravity of the road safety issue has given a strong impetus to robust action by Governments, with the support by the United Nations, other international organizations, the World Bank, regional development banks and others at the national, regional and international levels. Civil society and charity organizations have also played an active role in raising awareness and mobilizing joint international efforts. We would be remiss not to also mention the key role

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played in this process by the Commission for Global Road Safety chaired by Lord Robertson, and by the International Automobile Federation.

An important step forward in promoting global interaction in this field was made by the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow in November and attended by high-level delegations from more than 150 States. Let me express our gratitude to all the countries, international organizations and other key partners that contributed to the preparatory work and to the successful outcome of the forum.

The Moscow Conference established a solid basis for our future joint work to ensure global road safety. It would be no exaggeration to say that the international cooperation in this field has reached a fundamentally new level. We do not attribute the success of the meeting to the efforts of Russia alone. We are perfectly aware that its success was ensured through the active participation of Member States; our colleagues from the Sultanate of Oman, who for many years have actively promoted the issue of road safety in the United Nations; our partners in the United Nations system, above all, WHO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society. The meeting was the culmination of an intensive public awareness campaign called "Make roads safe" and the meticulous preparatory work of the many partners involved.

Addressing the Conference, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev emphasized that road safety is one of the major challenges to international development and that a common strategy and joint efforts are required to ensure global road safety. It is high time that the international community agreed to act through coordinated efforts to overcome the consequences of the global financial crisis.

The adoption of the Moscow declaration proposing that the United Nations proclaims the period 2011-2020 as a decade of action for road safety was the main outcome of the Conference. In this regard, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Improving global road safety" and contained in document A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, which was reissued for technical reasons on 1 March 2010. In addition to the initial 78 sponsors of the draft resolution, the following States have joined as additional sponsors: Albania, Australia, Bahrain, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Mauritius, Montenegro, Qatar, Spain, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America.

The text of the draft resolution was agreed through open consultations among Member States. We are grateful to all partners for their substantive proposals and amendments and their constructive approach, flexibility and readiness to compromise. Today, we are pleased to say that the General Assembly has before it a serious and comprehensive document that addresses all key aspects of the road safety agenda. Let me now briefly introduce the text of the draft resolution.

Among other things, the document notes that the General Assembly has welcomed the Moscow declaration adopted at the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety. It proclaims the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety, with a goal to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at the national, regional and global levels. It calls upon Member States to implement road safety activities, particularly in the areas of road safety management, road infrastructure, vehicle safety, road user behaviour, including distractions in traffic, road safety education and post-crash care, including rehabilitation for people with disabilities. It also invites States to set their own national road traffic casualty reduction targets to be achieved by the end of the Decade.

The draft resolution also requests WHO and the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation with other partners in the United Nations Global Road Safety Collaboration, to prepare a plan of action on practical steps to be taken, including knowledge-sharing and best practices in the areas of health care, education and transport; improving and harmonizing national road safety legislation; and the establishment of a working group of interested countries and international organizations to mobilize resources for road safety activities. The draft resolution also calls for the holding of a midterm review of the progress made in the implementation of the Moscow declaration.

The road safety agenda is an area of international cooperation with enduring human value. There is no place for political disputes or tension in this field. All of us must share the common goal of preserving human

life. Our joint efforts to reduce road injury rates at the national and international levels can not only help to prevent the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people; it can also contribute to the social and economic development of countries, especially low- and middle-income countries, including in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Moscow Conference gave us a good, robust start. For our part, I underscore our determination to maintain that accelerated pace with regard to practical steps to improve road safety. I call on all delegations to support the draft resolution and invite all Member States to join as sponsors.

Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his note transmitting the report on improving global road safety (A/64/266), prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions and other partners of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. I would also like to thank the members of the Collaboration, under the able guidance of the WHO, for their great contribution to the report's contents.

The report provides an update on the status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in resolutions 58/289, 60/5 and 62/244 on improving global road safety. It describes ongoing activities and the series of global road safety developments that have taken place in the course of the past two years. It also recognizes the significant impact that collaborative efforts have had on the implementation of road safety measures, and points to the growing recognition by Governments that action to improve road safety is an urgent matter. Sadly, the report also notes that road traffic injuries continue to jeopardize the advances made around the world in the areas of health and development. It also includes several recommendations for the Assembly's consideration.

Since the adoption of resolution 62/244, several meetings, workshops and commemorative events have taken place, including the publication of major reports. In that connection, I would like to pay special tribute to the excellent work of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, a consortium of four partners: the FIA Foundation, the Global Road Safety Partnership, the World Bank and WHO. The Collaboration has provided valuable guidance to countries on how to implement good practices in the area of road safety.

Through its working group on road traffic safety, the Economic Commission for Europe recently published an updated version of the consolidated resolutions on road traffic, signs and signals. Those resolutions constitute reference tools that provide guidelines to improve road safety, which are to be implemented by countries on a voluntary basis.

Three major reports were published in 2008 and 2009. In 2008, WHO and UNICEF launched the *World Report on Child Injury Prevention*, whose findings indicate that road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among children aged 10 to 19 years of age. In 2009, the Commission for Global Road Safety launched the report entitled *Make Roads Safe: A Decade of Action for Road Safety*. That report proposed a global target to reduce by 50 per cent the 2020 forecast of road deaths. It is estimated that achieving that target would save 5 million lives and prevent 50 million serious injuries during the coming decade. In 2009, WHO launched the *Global Status Report on Road Safety*, which is the first global assessment to draw from a standardized survey that included data received from 178 countries.

The United Nations regional commissions have continued to contribute positively to regional efforts to improve road safety. Meetings and workshops have been organized by the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Road Safety Forum for Ibero-America and the Caribbean. All of these organizations, commissions and stakeholders could not continue to provide such valuable service to our countries without the generous financial support provided by the World Bank, the Global Road Safety Facility, the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, the Governments of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia and the United States, the Bloomberg Philanthropies, Michelin, Johnson & Johnson and Scania.

During his annual meet-the-people tour in 2009, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said met with the people of the district of Sohar and spoke to them about road accidents and their impact on the social lives of citizens. His Majesty stated:

> "While we believe that life and death are destined by Allah, we know that the Almighty has ordained that people should not cast themselves upon perils. Some may die in these accidents, and

> others who survive may be disabled and become a burden on themselves, their families and their society. Therefore, we should join hands and be aware of this issue."

During his speech, His Majesty the Sultan urged everyone to make this issue a subject of discussion in their families. Road safety, he said, should be discussed and public awareness stressed in order to limit the number of road accidents, which are an obstacle to progress, growth and civilization.

His Majesty the Sultan affirmed in his speech that the relevant authorities, in particular the Royal Oman Police, are carrying out their duties and raising public awareness. They will do even more in the future, as they have instructions to step up their efforts to address this unfortunate phenomenon, which should be limited as much as possible. His Majesty went on to say:

> "[Road accidents] may be caused by a number of factors, but the human factor is the main cause. They may be caused by negligence in maintaining one's vehicle or a desire to reach one's destination as fast as possible. But it is better to arrive safely than on a stretcher or in the emergency room."

Further underscoring the importance of road safety, he stated:

> "I advise everyone to attach great importance to this issue. There is no doubt that all sectors of Omani society are listening to what I am saying from this blessed place. This is an important issue that continues to have an impact on Omani society."

Here, I would like to highlight the steps implemented by the Government of Oman at the national level. These include the enactment of legislation, the establishment of a national road safety agency, the updating of comprehensive regulations to meet the needs of the injured and their rehabilitation, and the creation of a registry of detailed information on the consequences of injuries in order to minimize the impact of accidents and with the ultimate goal of creating for our citizens an environment conducive to achieving further social and economic development. The Royal Oman Police has organized and participated in a number of events in its ongoing efforts to raise awareness of road safety issues. It has thus participated in both the Gulf Cooperation Council Traffic Week and the Arab Traffic Week.

The Directorate General of Traffic of the Royal Oman Police established the Road Safety Institute in 2006. Its mission is to train traffic officers. The Institute conducts a number of training programmes for driving instructors, taxi drivers and public transportation vehicle drivers. It also conducts programmes on first aid, administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation and defensive driving.

To ensure the safety of drivers and pedestrians alike, the Royal Oman Police is sparing no effort to ensure that traffic regulations are complied with. As speeding is the major cause of road accidents, resulting in 53 per cent of accidents in Oman, the Royal Oman Police has installed high-quality, fixed-speed radar detectors on all lit dual carriageways, and mobile speed radar detectors have been provided to all police departments in the provinces and regions of Oman. Since the installation of the radar speed detectors, there has been a significant decrease in the rate of speed violations.

The Royal Oman Police is also concerned about the road-worthiness of vehicles and has established vehicle inspection stations in all of Oman's regions. Those stations are equipped with the most modern technology and systems used in vehicle inspections.

With the increase in the number of vehicles and road users, it is important that rules and regulations be brought into line with the accelerating developments in all aspects of life. Traffic laws have been amended to address new and unfamiliar patterns of traffic behaviour.

Two years ago, this Assembly adopted resolution 62/244, which called for the holding of the first global high-level conference on road safety in Moscow. On 19 and 20 November 2009, thousands of representatives from all over the world came to Moscow, where, for the first time, delegations of ministers and representatives dealing with transport, health, education, safety and related traffic law enforcement issues met to discuss progress made in implementing the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* and the General Assembly's resolutions on improving global road safety. The Conference unanimously adopted the Moscow Declaration, which proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

with the goal of stabilizing and then reducing the level of road traffic fatalities around the world.

The Assembly has before it a draft resolution contained in document A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, in which the Assembly would endorse the recommendations of the Moscow Declaration. My delegation is a proud sponsor of the draft resolution and commends it to the Assembly for adoption.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and Iceland, State member of the European Economic Area, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia all join this declaration.

The European Union welcomes the imminent adoption by consensus of resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, entitled "Improving global road safety". We also note with satisfaction the large number of countries that have decided to sponsor the draft resolution, which demonstrates the relevance and timeliness of this issue and its importance to the international community. We express our special gratitude to the delegation of the Russian Federation for its leadership and efforts in this accomplishment.

As noted by the World Health Organization, road traffic injuries are a major public health problem and a leading cause of death and injury around the world. In the case of the European Union, involvement in a road accident is the leading cause of death or hospitalization for our citizens under 45 years. With 39,000 road traffic deaths in 2008 and socio-economic costs of around 2 per cent of gross domestic product, amounting to €180 billion, road safety continues to be an area for priority action in the European Union.

In 2003 the European Union set the goal of halving the number of deaths due to road accidents to approximately 27,000 deaths by 2010. It is a difficult goal to achieve. In December 2009, the European Commission hosted a conference to conclude a public consultation exercise preceding the drafting of the European Road Safety Action Programme 2011-2020. More than 400 stakeholders of varied backgrounds participated. Regional and multilateral institutions, development banks and civil society played an essential role.

The European Road Safety Action Programme 2011-2020 is aimed at keeping the European Union demanding and determined in our fight against road accidents. It will guide the efforts of the European Union in the coming decade. The new Action Programme will focus on key priorities such as accidents in rural roads, which account for 60 per cent of the total number of deaths, and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and the elderly.

In addition, we will continue building on our previous commitments, including by strengthening controls and penalties, adopting initiatives at the national level to combat driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, investing in road infrastructure, improving road traffic conditions, and improving legislation on drivers' licenses and fitness standards for driving.

The Moscow Declaration, adopted at the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow from 19 to 20 November 2009, and the subsequent proclamation of 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety are proof of the international commitment to keeping road safety high on the political agenda. We need to continue adopting wide-ranging, revised approaches and exchanging information and best practices at the national, regional and global levels, with the active participation of civil society and private sector. The international community cannot be lax on road safety because every year hundreds of thousands of human lives are at stake.

Ms. Yeoh (Malaysia): I am incredibly touched and humbled to be here at the United Nations for this historic meeting. I am immensely grateful to the Government of Malaysia for affording me this opportunity and privilege to speak on behalf of Malaysia, as well as the "Make roads safe" campaign.

For me, as a little girl growing up in Ipoh, Malaysia, the United Nations was something far and distant that represented our best and greatest hopes for the world. It still does. As members probably know, I am an actress, but of all the roles that I have played and all the villains I have defeated, sometimes with pretty cool martial arts moves, nothing has been as important or fulfilling as the role I have played on behalf of the "Make roads safe" campaign.

Just over a year ago, I helped to launch the call for a decade of action for road safety with a march by

2,000 young children through the streets of Ho Chi Minh City in Viet Nam. Seeing so many children all in one place, each one with a bright, glowing future, brought home to me the true scale of this epidemic of unnecessary road deaths and preventable injuries. Every day, at least 2,000 children are killed or seriously injured on the world's roads. It is an unconscionable waste of energy, love and human potential.

Back then, I knew that we could not stand by any longer and allow this to continue. This feeling, this determination and this pledge to end this tragic waste of young lives were reinforced in every hospital ward I visited and every inconsolable mother I met grieving for a lost child. I know the General Assembly shares that determination.

In November in Moscow, the world came together to decide that the time had come for action. It was thrilling to see so many leaders from every corner of the globe committing to make road safety a priority. All of us who care about and have worked for safer roads have travelled a long journey together. Today is the latest and the greatest stage of that journey, when the United Nations shall proclaim a Decade of Action for Road Safety. This is a marvellous achievement.

Malaysia would like to express our gratitude to the Russian Federation and the Sultanate of Oman for their leadership in promoting critical issues at the United Nations.

Now the real work begins. The real challenge we face is to translate words contained in a resolution into real results — the only results that ultimately count: lives saved and injuries prevented.

I am so very proud that my country, Malaysia, is setting such a strong example. In September 2004, realizing the urgency and need to address road safety issues in a systematic and planned manner, the Government of Malaysia set up the Road Safety Department under the Ministry of Transport as a one-stop agency to coordinate, monitor and implement road safety programmes. The immediate task of the Department was to outline holistic strategies to reduce injuries and fatalities due to road crashes. This gave birth to the Road Safety Plan of Malaysia 2006 to 2010, based on the four "e"s: education, enforcement, engineering and environment.

The Government has also formulated a long-term policy called the "Zero Fatality Vision", which is a safety policy and philosophy that covers all aspects of safety including the driver, the road infrastructure and environmental safety. The ultimate aim of this vision is that nobody should be killed or seriously injured within the road environment due to crashes.

The Malaysian road safety agenda has come a long way in the past 13 years. The fatality index declined from 8.2 fatalities per 10,000 registered vehicles in 1996 to 3.5 fatalities per 10,000 registered vehicles in 2009. In addition, for the period 2004-2009, injury cases due to accidents as reported cases dropped by 42 per cent.

At the regional level, Malaysia has emerged as one of the leaders in road safety, as shown by its election as the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Multi-Sector Road Safety Working Group during the fifteenth ASEAN Land Transport Working Group Meeting held in May 2009 in Brunei. ASEAN Governments were encouraged to form national working groups to provide a reporting and implementation mechanism on the progress of road safety initiatives in respective member countries. The ASEAN Governments also agreed to build the capacity of non-governmental organizations to be more active in road safety and identify funding opportunities for road safety programmes.

The leadership that is being demonstrated by Malaysia is resulting in real change and improvement. I know in all certainty that the next decade will be a decade of action for road safety in Malaysia. Working together, we can create a new momentum to help to ensure that this kind of holistic and sustainable approach to road safety is a reality in many more countries.

I know that tomorrow the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration will meet to begin detailed planning for the Decade of Action. The generous funding of Bloomberg Philanthropies is now enabling an unprecedented scale of activity by the World Health Organization, the Global Road Safety Partnership and other partners. Spearheaded by the World Bank's Global Road Safety Facility, there is now a renewed attention to road safety in the multilateral development banks. And I am particularly grateful to Lord Robertson for his inspired leadership of the Commission for Global Road Safety, and to both him

and the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society for giving me the opportunity to continue to advocate for road safety as the Global Ambassador of the "Make roads safe" campaign. So I commit today to playing my role — the most important role of my career — in making this Decade of Action a success.

I think back to the children who marched alongside me in October 2008 at the beginning of the campaign for a Decade of Action. Now, it is for those children and the millions like them that we must act to make roads safe.

Mr. Gutiérrez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): For developing countries, road traffic accidents represent one of the leading causes of premature death and constitute a public health problem that has effects on our development and impinges upon people's rights.

The data obtained by the World Health Organization (WHO) are worrying. It is unjustifiable that 1.2 million people die every year in traffic accidents — one of the leading causes of death for people aged between 5 and 44 years. It has been estimated that, unless action is taken immediately, at this rate road traffic accidents will become the fifth leading cause of death in the world by 2030. In the same context, according to the World Bank, children between the ages of 5 and 14 will be at greatest risk; for that group, traffic accidents will become the principal cause of death or injury by 2015.

As noted by the WHO, 90 per cent of such accidents occur in low- or medium-income countries. In my country, it must be said, the figures are chilling. Every day, 10 people die as a consequence of traffic accidents. Over the past decade, such accidents have caused the death of more than 32,000 people and injured more than 342,000. Every year, such accidents cause approximately 3,500 deaths; 78 per cent of victims are passersby, the majority of whom are poor. This generates further inequity, since accidents disproportionately affect people who cannot cope with their consequences, being unable to access health services or take on the costs of rehabilitation.

Likewise, traffic accidents do not only cause suffering and cut short lives; they also constitute an immense economic loss that has a serious impact on development in the country. According to data collected by the Ministry of Health of my country, Peru loses more than $1 billion a year due to traffic accidents.

We know that the main causes of traffic accidents are associated with speeding, reckless or drunk driving, mechanical failures, lack of caution on the part of pedestrians, poorly maintained road surfaces and the lack of signs and signals, among other things. This shows the need for urgent and concerted action to introduce legislative reforms, strengthen our ability to detect violations and impose penalties, ensure adequate logistical and technological support, improve road infrastructure and, above all, make people aware of road safety.

It is painful to acknowledge that traffic accidents are avoidable and that they are caused by a series of factors linked to State management and the activities of businesses and the community in general.

Faced with the gravity of this situation, Peru has introduced several measures, including the National Road Safety Plan, whose objective is to reduce traffic accidents by 30 per cent by 2011. The Plan has established six strategic objectives: promote a culture of respect for transport standards; involve the mass media in promoting road safety; develop verification and monitoring mechanisms for road infrastructure; review the legal framework; designing and implementing a reliable data-collection system; and strengthen the actions of the National Road Safety Council.

In the context of efforts to make improvements in developing and enforcing standards, starting in July this year Peru will have a new transportation code that will increase penalties. Furthermore, in August, Peru launched the 2009-2012 National Traffic Accident Health Strategy with the aim of reducing morbidity and mortality resulting from such accidents. The objectives of the Strategy include ensuring quality, timely and comprehensive care for people who are injured or disabled in road accidents.

The challenges for countries such as Peru in this area are complex, and to tackle them we need the help of the private sector and civil society, as well as the commitment of the international community and multilateral bodies. To that end, my country has co-sponsored and decisively supported the draft resolution that we shall adopt shortly.

As the Moscow declaration says, the global road safety crisis can be solved only through multisectoral cooperation and the formation of partnerships among all parties concerned in the public and private sectors,

with the participation of civil society. Furthermore, given the cross-cutting nature of this issue, addressing road safety can make a significant contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We view these two concepts, which were integral to the negotiations, as being of crucial importance, and it is on their basis that we should work throughout the Decade of Action for Road Safety, from 2011 to 2020. In the same context, the action plan for the Decade, which has been endorsed by the WHO and the United Nations regional commissions as a guiding document in the implementation of the Decade's objectives, is also of particular importance.

The serious situation resulting from road traffic accidents demands an urgent moral and political commitment to guaranteeing road safety and ensuring that roads lead to progress, well-being and the development of our societies. In this context, my country is grateful to Russia and Oman for their initiative. We are firmly convinced of the need and we have the political will to continue working hand in hand with the entire international community to make progress towards this objective.

Mr. Sammis (United States of America): The United States is proud to co-sponsor draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, "Improving global road safety". We thank the Government of Russia for its commitment to this critical issue. The Moscow Ministerial Conference on Global Road Safety in November and today's draft resolution are important steps towards making our roads safer. We also appreciate the efforts of the Government of Oman, the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration and the World Health Organization.

Each day, thousands of people die on the roads. Every year, tens of millions are injured. The majority of those affected are young people and those who live in developing countries. The human and economic costs are enormous.

To address that scourge, we must continue to push for increased helmet and seat-belt use, along with reductions in speeding and alcohol-impaired driving. We must build standardized systems for collecting and analysing crash data, promote the design of safer roads and vehicles, and implement laws and regulations that reflect best practices and standards. We must also address serious emerging challenges.

The United States is deeply concerned about the risks posed by distracted driving, particularly texting while driving. Last year in the United States, 6,000 people died on the roads and more than half a million were injured because of distracted or inattentive driving. If we do not act, the problem will only grow worse as the number of vehicles on our roadways rises and communication technologies, such as cell phones and texting devices, become even more widely available.

We recognize that new technologies have helped solve many global road safety challenges, even as they have distracted some drivers from the road. The United States believes that we must spur innovation and harness the promise of science and new technologies, but also work to minimize their accompanying perils.

We are pleased that this draft resolution recognizes the great risk posed by distracted driving, including texting while driving, and encourages Governments, public and private corporations and non-governmental and multilateral organizations to help reduce that danger.

On 1 October 2009, President Obama issued an executive order directing United States Government employees not to engage in text messaging while driving United States Government vehicles or privately-owned vehicles on official Government business, or while using electronic equipment supplied by the Government.

We encourage other Member States, along with the United Nations system, to join us in issuing similar directives to prohibit texting while driving. We also look forward to working with other countries to document efforts to reduce distracted driving and to develop guidance for further action.

The United States is committed to saving lives and reducing the devastation of driver accidents, and we look forward to working with Member States and the United Nations to make all of our roadways safer.

Mr. Singh Puri (India): At the outset, let me say how happy I am to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting this afternoon. India welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate on the important issue of road safety. We would like to thank the Government of the Russian Federation for its initiative in hosting the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Moscow in November last year. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Government of Oman for

its consistent support for this agenda item. India is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*.

We have carefully gone through the report on improving global road safety (A/64/266), transmitted by the Secretary-General. We thank the World Health Organization (WHO) for preparing the report in consultation with regional commissions and other partners of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration.

According to the report, low- and middle-income countries witness over 90 per cent of the world's fatalities on the roads, despite accounting for only 48 per cent of the world's vehicles. Apart from the personal suffering that such road traffic injuries cause, they also threaten health and development gains. The importance of addressing road safety thus has a key development dimension. It is therefore encouraging that the United Nations has recognized road traffic injuries as an extensive and serious global health problem, requiring coordinated international cooperation efforts.

In India, road transport is the dominant mode of transportation, accounting for 70 per cent of freight movement and 85 per cent of passenger traffic. We have one of the largest road networks in the world, with 3.3 million kilometres of roads. National highways account for about 2 per cent of the country's road network, but carry 40 per cent of total traffic, leading to severe congestion.

Road traffic accidents claim over 80,000 victims a year, constituting a major public health problem, with considerable social and economic costs. Almost half of those who die in road traffic crashes are vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists or users of two-wheelers. India is therefore acutely conscious of the imperative to address road safety and reduce the adverse consequences of traffic accidents.

India's economic growth lies in part upon the rapid expansion of our infrastructure, including roads. We are actively engaged in efforts to enhance road safety. We believe that road safety requires the coordination of three aspects: engineering and design, enforcement, and education involving civil society to spread awareness. Our response entails a coordinated and multisectoral approach, incorporating relevant parts of the Government, civil society and the private sector. Our interventions seek to cover the following phases of road traffic injury control: the prevention of crashes and injuries in the first place, the provision of prompt and high-quality care to those injured in traffic crashes, and the provision of rehabilitation and long-term care to those who need it in order to minimize disabilities. We are striving to make road safety a health, transportation, law-enforcement, education and development priority.

The national highway system is being widened and strengthened under various schemes. Plans for the development of an Indian national expressway network in a phased manner by the year 2022 are currently under way. Many of the recommendations made in the WHO report are being used as a framework for addressing road safety.

We recognize the significance of strengthening capacity to collect, use and share road safety information. Legislation is being reviewed comprehensively to meet the emerging requirements of road safety. Information technology is also being used in the road transport sector, including through smartcard-based driving licences and registration certificates. We are also taking steps to develop a road safety culture in the country. The twenty-first annual road safety week was observed from 1 to 7 January this year throughout the country, involving regional governments, voluntary organizations and vehicle manufacturers.

International cooperation is imperative in assisting developing countries to effectively address issues of road safety. The availability of adequate financial resources, technical assistance, capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and advocacy are crucial in that regard. While we are encouraged by the increase in funding reported in the WHO report, including through private sector and civil society involvement, we agree with the report's assessment that levels of funding for road safety are still not commensurate with the scale of the problem and that increased efforts must be made to secure additional financial support for road safety projects. However, we would caution against setting universal standards based on what may have been developed in one region, and stress that specific circumstances in various parts of the world must be taken into account in addressing road safety.

We strongly support the intent to increase cooperation at the national, regional and global levels to achieve the objectives of road safety as part of the

Decade of Action for Road Safety. We also look forward to a concrete plan of action that takes into account the needs of developing countries for adequate support to build capacities in this area so as to implement the objectives by the end of the decade.

Ms. Rovirosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for its leadership and its constructive and flexible spirit in the negotiations on draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, which it introduced to the General Assembly today.

For our country, improving road safety throughout the world is a significant matter, since Mexico is no stranger to this problem. We need only point out that we are in third place in the Americas after the United States and Brazil in terms of the number of deaths caused by road accidents. Figures indicate that there are between 17,000 and 24,000 deaths a year in my country due to the lack of road safety.

Based on the concern generated by these indicators, two years ago we created the Mexican Road Safety Initiative, the main objective of which is to promote strategies and action in all spheres — public, social and private — in order to reduce the number of accidents, injuries, deaths and disabilities caused by motor vehicle accidents. The Mexican Road Safety Initiative has three main aspects. First, it takes a comprehensive approach based on epidemiology and public health. Secondly, it is based on scientific evidence. Thirdly, it is based on a multisectoral perspective.

At the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow in November 2009, our country introduced this Initiative as a common good that could be shared by others and used as a model for the entire Mesoamerican region, whereby it would be called the Mesoamerican Road Safety Initiative. Through the Initiative, the Government of Mexico has pledged to devote resources to research, communication, education and training, among other areas.

We note that, in the context of actions in support of promoting the Decade of Action for Road Safety, which is taken up in the draft resolution to be adopted today, our country will be the host of two international events. The first is the Third Latin America and Caribbean Forum Road Safety Stakeholders Forum, to be held in October, and the second is the Second Ibero-American Encounter on Road Safety, which will take place in March 2011.

Mexico's commitment to addressing this problem has also been reflected in our participation in the Group of Friends of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. We have therefore co-sponsored the draft resolution on improving road safety throughout the world. Mexico believes that the Decade will help to ensure that our countries can correct underreporting and improve road safety data information systems. The main challenge for our country and for others will be to strengthen a structure of multisectoral work at the national level that is also operational at the state and municipal level.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Schmale (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I am grateful for this opportunity to deliver a brief statement on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In 1998, we issued the *World Disasters Report*, highlighting road safety as a key issue requiring attention. Since then, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has become increasingly concerned about the rapid escalation of the global road safety crisis that now kills 3,000 people every day and injures 50 times as many. We know that urgent action is required to reverse the growing crisis, which disproportionately affects young people, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

We also know that the deadly road crash crisis is different from other crises in that it is neither a natural disaster nor a war. There are no enemies in road safety. It is entirely human-made and is all the more shocking for being so. What makes the road crash crisis particularly horrific is that these deaths and injuries are entirely preventable. This crisis is also characterized by the fact that there is little international funding to help address it.

However, we are encouraged by the growing international response and alignment that have taken place over the past 10 years. We welcomed the publication of the seminal *World Report on Road*

Traffic Injury Prevention. The members of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration have produced a series of good practice manuals that address the key road safety risks. Civil society, business and Government partnership action are increasingly using these manuals very concretely to make a real change. These actions show that it is possible to share proven cost-effective solutions across the globe, with significant results.

We welcome these actions, and at the same time we recognize that together we must do much, much more to transform these small beginnings into a global wave of positive and effective change.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are already part of the increasing global response. Active and committed in the field of road safety, many are mobilizing decision-makers, creating awareness among young people and the wider public and providing first aid services and training, often integrating road safety in their first aid programmes.

The International Federation has integrated road safety as a priority into its strategic direction for the next 10 years. We work closely with the Global Road Safety Partnership — a partnership among Governments, governmental agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations, whose secretariat we host in Geneva. We and our member Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are ready to do more and to do better together with Governments, the private sector, civil society, communities and international organizations.

The International Federation is proud that national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies are mentioned in the operative section of this year's draft resolution on improving global road safety (A/64/L.44/Rev.1*), and we are committed to acting upon it. We welcome the draft resolution and the coming Decade of Action for Road Safety, and we are determined to implement activities in support of the Decade.

In conclusion, the road crash crisis concerns us all. We must act without delay, first to prevent today's deadly trend from worsening, and then to reverse it. Our vision is a world free of road crash death and injury. The choice to move towards this vision is ours, collectively and individually. I can guarantee the Assembly that the International Federation and its member Red Cross and Red Crescent societies will play their role fully in the coming Decade of Action for Road Safety. It is a matter of life and death. It is time for all of us to act.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, entitled "Improving global road safety", which has been reissued for technical reasons.

I should like to announce that since the publication of draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Cape Verde, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Grenada, Haiti, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Slovakia, Spain, the Sudan, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1*?

Draft resolution A/64/L.44/Rev.1 was adopted* (resolution 64/255).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 46?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 125

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization

Draft resolution (A/64/L.45)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.45.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO): the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization has enjoyed observer status in the General Assembly since 2004. In that time, the CSTO secretariat has established contact with the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate.

The emerging mechanism of CSTO peacekeeping activities facilitates the utilization of its capacities in peacekeeping operations, including under United Nations auspices. The goals of the CSTO, which became a regional international organization with the entry into force of its charter on 18 September 2003 and its registration with the United Nations Secretariat on 16 December of the same year, are the strengthening of peace and international and regional stability and the collective protection of the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of its member States.

To achieve those goals, CSTO member States give pride of place to political means, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The outcomes of CSTO activities are proof of its true potential to cooperate with the United Nations on the basis of partnership and mutually reinforcing efforts. Given the increasing importance of combating emerging challenges and the significance accorded by the United Nations to developing comprehensive cooperation with regional organizations, the adoption of a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization is now on our agenda.

We are grateful to all States that participated in preparing draft resolution A/64/L.45. Its adoption by consensus will help to further boost wide-ranging cooperation between the two organizations.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/64/L.45.

I should like to announce that since draft resolution A/64/L.45 was submitted, Papua New Guinea has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.45?

Draft resolution A/64/L.45 was adopted (resolution 64/256).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 125?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 126

Sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Draft resolution (A/64/L.46)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.46.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On its own behalf and that of the 53 sponsors from all regions of the world, the Russian delegation is honoured to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/64/L.46, entitled "Sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War". We note that since the draft resolution was submitted to the Secretariat, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors, in addition to those already listed in the distributed text: Australia, Benin, Cambodia, the Congo, Egypt, France, India, Iraq, Israel, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Somalia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zambia.

This year, we will celebrate an important date: the sixty-fifth anniversary of the victory in the Second World War. We are not only entitled, but also obliged to be proud of that common victory. Tens of millions of people gave their lives for the ideals of humanism and fairness to prevail. The aspiration to free humanity from the scourge of war forever served as the basis for the establishment of the United Nations, whose Charter became a code of conduct for States and international organizations and the commonly recognized basis for the formation of a new world order and the current system of international law.

Establishing the anti-Hitler coalition was certainly an unprecedented example of States with different ideologies and political systems uniting before a common threat to all humanity. As Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has underscored, "its participants succeeded in overcoming their differences in favour of a most critical undertaking". That is why the victory in the Second World War is particularly important today, when the international community

must pool its efforts in the face of global challenges and threats, such as international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and transnational organized crime. Our fathers and grandfathers have shown us that such unity is possible. Now, it is our duty to follow in their footsteps.

However, we must not forget that that war was a great tragedy for the people of Europe and the world. Today, it is important to remember the lessons of the Second World War, to enshrine the memory of those who died and to help preserve national historical remembrance. This is our common history, and these events, as we said, led to the creation of the United Nations. We are convinced that caring about our past and commemorating historical truths will be a unifying and consolidating factor in helping the international community to move forward.

Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution requests the President of the General Assembly to hold a special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in the second week of May 2010 in commemoration of all victims of the war. The Russian Federation would like to propose that the meeting be held on 6 May.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

We will soon commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a tragic chapter in the history of Europe and the entire world. The draft resolution before us today (A/64/L.46) is a most fitting way to mark this occasion, as was the resolution on the sixtieth anniversary, which the European Union also supported.

We must never forget the horrors of the past and the cruelty of war so as not to repeat them. We have the responsibility of ensuring that crimes against humanity and war crimes never recur. We must also remember the sacrifices made and mourn the lives that were lost in the war, the Holocaust, occupations and acts of repression. We believe that an awareness of history helps to prevent the recurrence of similar crimes.

The United Nations was conceived in order to preserve international peace and security. In its very preamble, the Charter states that "We the peoples of the United Nations" are

> "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

We must overcome the legacies of war and build on the progress made since the end of the Second World War in promoting democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. With regard to its commemoration, we must pay tribute to all those who fought for liberty and peace. They should inspire us to look to the future with hope and to redouble our efforts for peace and understanding. We Members of the United Nations must today play this crucial role together.

We are very conscious of the fact that it is not just the two World Wars that have brought untold sorrow to humankind over the past 100 years. Too often, our efforts for peace have failed. The European Union, which was itself born from the ashes of conflict, is firmly committed to working with the other Members of the United Nations to put an end to this scourge and create a more peaceful, just and prosperous world for future generations. We believe that an honest and thorough debate on history will enable us to move towards reconciliation on the basis of truth and remembrance.

We welcome the draft resolution presented by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, and we thank him warmly for his work. The draft resolution preserves the memory of the victims of one of the darkest episodes of our history.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/64/L.46. In addition to those new sponsors mentioned by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, I would like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Belgium, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Slovakia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.46?

Draft resolution A/64/L.46 was adopted (resolution 64/257).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 126.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.